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PEAK Performances at Montclair State University

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Biographies

Heidi Latsky’s (Director) 38-year dance career began in Montreal, Canada, continued with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company, and evolved further in 2001 when she founded her company, Heidi Latsky Dance (HLD).

Regarded by the *New York Times* as “a choreographer and dancer of uncommon intelligence and fluidity,” Latsky’s work has been featured at venues such as the American Dance Festival, Joyce Theater, High Line, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Her artistic portfolio has been supported by Creative Capital, the MAP Fund, Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Canada Council for the Arts, and New York State Council on the Arts, among others.

Latsky was the first participant selected for “Dance for Film on Location” at Montclair State University, underwritten by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Here, she created her first film, *Soliloquy* (2015), which has been screened worldwide. *Soliloquy* marked the beginning of Latsky’s entrance into the digital world with a goal to create more widely accessible work for all to interact with. In 2018, Latsky spearheaded a pilot program, underwritten by Craig H. Nielsen Foundation, to work closely with individuals with spinal cord injuries to improve their physical awareness, bodily mobility, and artistic comfort. The impact of this program culminated in the creation of a documentary film called *We Are Right Here*. This past year, Latsky was commissioned by Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts to produce a film, *SOLOFLIGHT ADA 30*, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In an effort to further bridge the gap between dance and disability communities, Latsky has presented keynote and speaking engagements at places such as the Culture, Health, and Wellbeing International Conference, Harvard University, Barnard College, Maxine Green Institute, Chicago Humanities Festival, and TEDxWomen. As a leader in the physically integrated dance field and an active disability rights advocate, Latsky serves as a founding member of Dance/NYC’s Disability Dance task force, ongoing member of Dance/USA Deaf & Disability Affinity Group, and Artist Advisory Board member of Danspace Project.

Currently, Latsky is working to create accessible digital work that portrays our deeply shared experiences of isolation in a way that builds and strengthens community.

Sabrina Bennett (Dancer) is a 35-year-old artist born to Jamaican Immigrants. As an L1 incomplete paraplegic, Sabrina has turned trauma into triumph. She is a peer mentor for other individuals with spinal cord injuries, an adaptive Zumba instructor for senior citizens, and a model spreading awareness about the importance of adaptive clothing. Dancing since a young age, Sabrina has performed ballroom dancing with Roll Call and contemporary dance with ZCO Dance Company and Heidi Latsky Dance. During her time with HLD, Sabrina has been challenged to use raw emotion and translate it into movement, which has been a powerful experience.

Desmond Cadogan (Dancer) initially started his dance training at Les Ballet Jazz de Montréal and continued at the Dance Theatre of Harlem School and Joffrey Ballet School. His time at the Royal Winnipeg Ballet School left Cadogan terribly injured, making it difficult for him to start a performing career early in life. After modeling for many years, Desmond took classes from Heidi Latsky in Canada. When he observed an HLD rehearsal, it was love at first sight. After years of modeling for artists like Robert Mapplethorpe, Jean Michel Basquiat, and Rainer Fetting, with whom Desmond sat for many paintings

and sculptures, *On Display* felt like a perfect fit. It has been a dream come true and tremendous honor for him to dance with HLD for the last four years.

Meredith Fages (Dancer) joined HLD in 2007 and has also performed with Motley Dance, Steeledance, Jimena Paz, Laura Peterson, Todd Rosenlieb Dance, and Virginia Ballet Theatre, featured in Ashton, Balanchine, Christensen, and Tudor ballets. Described by Deborah Jowitt as a “remarkable dancer...adept in some society of the future, [a] primal, near-aquatic creature slipping around in a watery world...,” she graduated from Columbia University with a Pre-Medical concentration in English. Her writing has appeared in *Dance Magazine* and *Dance Teacher*.

Judy Garfinkel (Dancer) began working with HLD in the spring of 2014. Her dance background includes performing with the National Ballet of Israel, the Eglevsky Ballet, the Feld Ballet, and Indah Walsh Dance Company. Judy taught ballet at Sarah Lawrence College and developed the movement/dance program for The Mead School. Since receiving her master’s degree in Holistic Thinking and Learning as well as her professional coaching certification (at 55!), Judy has helped people thrive through her career transition, job search, and life coaching practice-Move Into Change.

Tiffany Geigel (Dancer) is a Puerto Rican, native New Yorker who works as a dancer, model, and disability advocate. She holds a BA in Dance and currently works with Heidi Latsky Dance Company. Tiffany’s TV appearances include *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Don’t Shoot the Messenger*, *Two In A Million: Tiniest Torso*, among others. Tiffany has modeled for fashion jeweler Alexi Bittar. *The Beauty of Tiffany*, a modeling book project featuring Tiffany, by Asael Dror, is available on Amazon.

Nico Gonzales (Dancer), originally from Colorado, is New York City-based dancer currently residing in Queens. Nico holds a BFA in Dance from NYU Tisch and is a certified Pilates instructor through the Kane School. He has performed and collaborated with choreographers including Rohan Bhargava/Rovaco Dance, Bryn Cohn + Artists, and Gwendolyn Gussman/HOLDTIGHT in addition to Heidi Latsky Dance.

Terrence Hewitt (Dancer) joined Heidi Latsky dance in 2007 during a project that involved the AIDS Service Center. This piece was performed at Danspace’s curated performance series, *Food for Thought*. He was also a part of Heidi Latsky’s *IF* at the JCC, as well as *D.I.S.P.L.A.Y.E.D* and “On Display Global” both performed at several venues. As an artist, he creates sculptures out of stone, wood, clay/plaster, and paper. Performing with Heidi Latsky Dance at different sites such as the United Nations and Highline has inspired how he continues to create his own sculptures and also how he approaches his life.

Jillian Hollis (Dancer), originally from Syracuse, NY, is a Point Park University graduate who joined HLD in 2002 and is now the company’s rehearsal director. Her dancing has been described as “blithely irrepressible” by the NY Times. In addition to Jillian’s work with Heidi Latsky Dance, she collaborates with other artists, is a burlesque performer, and was Miss Coney Island 2018.

Donald Lee (Dancer) is a disabled artist based in New York City and an HLD company member. In his transgressive artistic practice, he prides amateurism as an approach to create varied work that challenges and delights all audiences, provoking questions about conventions in aesthetics structures. He is process-oriented and advocates for disability artistry

and inclusivity in the arts, for which he has been quoted by *ARTNews*, *Fjord Review*, and *the New York Times*. He has performed with HLD at the United Nations, Whitney Museum, National Portrait Gallery, and at City Winery as part of Perry Farrell’s Kind Heaven Orchestra Tour.

Claude-Andrée Louissaint (Dancer) has an MA from NYU in Performing Arts Administration and has worked at Danspace Project, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and American Symphony Orchestra. Claude has been working with Heidi and her company since 2001.

Louisa Mann (Dancer) began her training in Brattleboro, Vermont, at the Brattleboro School of Dance. She has a BFA in Dance from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and is currently working on her master’s in Dance/Movement Therapy at the Pratt Institute. She began working with Heidi Latsky Dance in 2015.

Carmen Schoenster (Dancer) joined HLD in October of 2016 after meeting Heidi at Steps on Broadway. Carmen previously danced for Todd Rosenlieb Dance for two years and has also trained at Nashville Ballet, Charlotte Ballet, Complexions, and fParsons Dance and graduated from the Governor’s School for the Arts in 2011.

Nathan Trice (Dancer) is the artistic director and founder of nathan trice / RITUALS dance, theater, and music company based in Brooklyn, NY, since 1998. His company develops and presents artistic/educational programs and performances that reflect the importance of empathy, compassion, and understanding in the pursuit of global humanism. In 2014, Trice, along with Maria Bauman and Sarita Covington, co-founded ACRE (Artists Co-creating Real Equity), a multiracial, intergenerational group of artists committed to organizing for racial equity in the influential realms of arts and culture. Trice also consults and organizes for the antiracist Coalition of Faith, Ethical & Spiritual Communities in the New York City/New Jersey Metropolitan Area.

Peter Trojic (Dancer) is a native New Yorker and disabled dancer with Cerebral Palsy who has been with Heidi Latsky Dance since the summer of 2015. Peter also dances with Full Radius Dance in Atlanta, GA. Peter attended Queens College and received a BA in Urban Planning and Environmental Studies.

Alexander Allen (Production Manager) is ecstatic to join Heidi Latsky Dance for *On Display*. He is a graduate of Indiana University, where he received his BA in Theatre & Drama with a concentration in Stage Management. His most recent Stage Management credits are PSM: *The Enigmatist* at the Highline Hotel, *The Potluck Plays* for the Asian American Artist Alliance, and *Our Labyrinth* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Ximena Borges (Music) is a New York/Venezuelan experimental musician and extremely eclectic songwriter. Combining digital and analogue technologies, she uses her voice to blend the music of disparate times and places. Besides her solo project “XI.ME.NA,” she composes for theater-dance companies such as Damage Dance and Buglisi Dance Theater.

Anna Kathleen Little (Fashion) studied Fashion Design and Theory at NYU’s Gallatin School. In 2010, she began her design career for a boutique luxury womens-wear house. In 2012, she ventured into the fashion industry as a designer for corporations such as Banana Republic, and the film industry in production design.

Susan Obrant (Fashion) has been nominated for a Grammy in record album art, and as a museum level painter, Obrant has worldwide collectors. Her crochet has been called “sophisticated, edgy, abstract art you can wear, *A Serious Art Discussion*, currently at HVCCA Art Museum in NY, combines both. Both Audra McDonald in film and Daisy Jopling at Lincoln Center have performed in Obrant pieces.

Rosa Weinberg (Fashion) is a Massachusetts-based artist and licensed architect who creates functional objects and sculptural wearables. She teaches interdisciplinary classes based on the architectural studio model full-time at NuVu Studio, an innovation school for middle and high school students in Cambridge, MA.

NuVu Studio (Fashion) is a full-time innovation school for middle and high school students. Under the guidance of Jenny Kinard and Rosa Weinberg, students create custom sculptural wearables. Teams of students interviewed HLD dancers and then synthesized content to create wearable art that represented these personal stories.

Janet Wong (Film) is the associate artistic director of the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and New York Live Arts. Originally from Hong Kong, she trained as a dancer in Hong Kong and London, and danced professionally in Berlin. Janet started working with video and projection in 2005.

Robert Wierzel (Lighting) has worked with artists from diverse disciplines and backgrounds in theater, dance, opera, and contemporary music, with companies throughout the country and abroad. His theater work has been seen on and off Broadway, including *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill*, starring Audra McDonald; the musical *Fela!* (Tony Award nomination), *Dreams and Nightmares*, and productions at the NYSF/Public Theater, Roundabout Theatre Company; Signature Theatre Company; Playwrights Horizons, Mostly Mozart Festival, BAM, The Acting Company; and the Lincoln Center Festival/American Songbook Series. He has worked with the opera companies in Paris-Garnier; Versailles-Château de Versailles Spectacles; Tokyo; Toronto; Bergen & Kristiansand Norway, Folk Opera, Sweden; Dutch National; Wexford Festival Opera; NYCO; Glimmerglass Festival; Atlanta; Seattle; Boston Lyric; Minnesota; Philadelphia; San Francisco; Houston; Washington National; Chicago Lyric; Chicago Opera Theatre; Montreal; Vancouver; Florida Grand; Portland; Colorado; Wolf Trap; San Diego; Virginia; Hawaii; and Gotham Chamber Opera. He has collaborated for decades with choreographer and director Bill T. Jones and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company. Other collaborations include works with Heidi Latsky; Sean Curran; Larry Goldhuber; Preeti Vasudevan; Liz Gerring; Arthur Aviles; Doug Varone; Molissa Fenely; Donna Uchizono; Alonzo King; Charlie Moulton; Margo Sappington; Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and the Trisha Brown Dance Company. In addition, Robert has worked extensively at most major regional theaters throughout the country. Robert is on the faculty of NYU Tisch School of the Arts and is a Creative Partner at Spark Design Collaborative.

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